

Torino - Your motivation letter for this activity

Ciao Torino!

I'm Andrei, an electrical engineering student at the Technical University of Vienna that has a keen passion for transportation systems and the way it impacts our lives. For the past 200 years humanity has experienced an unprecedented growth in technology and we found ourselves to be using all the resources mother nature has granted in an inefficient manner such that the environment is starting to suffer from our carelessness.

Past mistakes and negligences have caught up to us, and we are starting to see the effects of what our actions have made and the future doesn't look bright if we keep up the status quo. The transportation sector is the biggest contributor to this worrying trend, with around 25% of all greenhouse gas emissions coming from automobiles, planes, trains and ships.

It might look like we are on the right track, but I believe our efforts are a bit slow, governments are sluggish to put in motion new laws and regulations, companies only care for profits and emerging markets such as China, India or Brazil care mostly about catching up to western economies and choose to mostly ignore what effects that may entail.

While I am not a politician and have no ambition to become one, I am an engineer (or at least aspiring to be one) and I feel it is my responsibility to find, to explore and to research new and more efficient ways to revolutionize the transportation industry, not only for my sake as a human living in the present on Earth, but for future generations and for everyone that inherits this planet we call home.

I hope by joining your course I can gain valuable insight into how better we can innovate the current system, identify most damaging sectors of the transportation industry and set our focus on solving those problems through new and creative ways, because I believe in order to really to change the future, one needs to be bold and assume risks, that is the only manner in which we can achieve true change.

Of course, while the academic part is of huge interest to me, BEST is more than just that, it's an exploration of culture and social activities, and as I have learned from the previous event I attended, these are not to be taken lightly :). It is a lifetime chance to get to meet so many new people, all from different backgrounds and nationalities, each of them with their own worldview and way of thinking, but together we will share the experience of partying, the Italian way!

I have never been to Turin, but have been to Italy many times, and fell in love with the culture, the rich and diverse architecture, and the colorful and lively Italian language!

Turin is very interesting to me since it has played such a big role in the blooming and flowering of modern day Italy, is a major industrial centre and hosts one of the most prestigious football clubs in the world.

It's no coincidence that the course topic is tightly related to Turin's identity as Italy's automotive industry hub. Without a doubt this is an amazing opportunity to gain insight into the leading companies of the automotive world, at least during the day, but when class is over and the moonlight falls, we will roam the streets and sing our Tunaks and drink and dance until either our bodies give out or you, the organisers, tell us to run back home :).

If accepted for your course, I look forward to meeting and bonding with all the great people and forming valuable memories that one can cherish for a lifetime.

Cheers, Andrei

Activity specific questions

What is the most unsustainable/polluting transport that humans use and how would you reduce its use?

The most polluting transport as a percentage of the total greenhouse emission gases is the automobile, as it has been in use for almost a century and only recently has its damaging effects on the environment been investigated and looked more closely into.

It's near ubiquitous use as "the" transportation method around the world has helped humanity both in industrial use but also in personal use, it is seen as almost a given norm that every family owns a car, our western society is basically built upon this principle. Now while this maybe was the way of the 20th century, and beginning of current one, a change is needed, in some fashion, because we cannot realistically keep up the current state of events if we are ever to preserve our resources and our environment.

There have been a number of innovations in this sector, most popular nowadays is the shift to electric vehicles, as they have 0 emissions, and get all their energy from the grid.

This is also enables a vehicle-to-grid system that further incentives generation of energy from sources such as wind or solar.

Another one would be to reduce our dependence upon cars, and seek alternatives in public transportation or if possible biking. A successful example of this can be seen in European cities that have a developed railway, tramway and integrated bike lanes.

What is the transport system on its development humans should focus the most? Why?

In my opinion there should be a higher focus on high-speed and efficient public transportation systems, a good example being the bullet trains used in Japan or maglev in China. Both offer considerable speed, comfort and reliability while also retaining affordability for the average consumer. Specifically for maglev trains the maintenance costs are almost non-existent, the only huge drawback are the initial infrastructure costs, which represents a big challenge to engineers and manufacturers, as they must somehow find a feasible way to reduce these costs without undermining safety and performance.

These high-speed rail systems can be used for inter city travel specifically for short to medium distances, and would be a great feature for growing markets such as India, Brazil, South-East Asia, where a lot of cities are not that far part to warden aerial travel, so in situations where in the past a car would be the go-to choice, I can see these railway systems replacing easily.

Write a short story using the following words: chicken, lego, gianduiotti, airplane. Be creative! ;)

There's an urban legend that says if a chicken eats a special kind of a candy, namely gianduiotti, it can gain superpowers. What kind of superpowers, nobody really knew.

Now of course, scientists and researchers have attempted to debunk this myth, many thousands of chicken have been experimented on, but so far nothing happened to any of them (apart from getting extremely fat).

However, there was one man who thought we could prove them all wrong, and his name was Pollo da Vinci (long lost relative of Leonardo da Vinci). He had discovered that all the chicken while seemingly normal after consuming the candy, given a bit of free space, would attempt to flap their wings more often than the normal chickens. This intrigued him.

So naturally, being the inventor that he was at the tender of 6, he made an airplane model out of legos which he then placed on the roof of his house, he had to be careful though, because his mom never allowed him to go to the 2nd floor. Finally after weeks of assembling and manufacturing, he grabs a chicken that was only being ed gianduiotti, the lego airplane and goes up to the roof. He sets it on the plane and moves it close the edge. The chicken, a bit frightened, gives young Pollo da Vinci a look of both fear and enthusiasm. '- You can do it, I believe in you.' , said the boy.

The chicken feeling slightly more motivated, started to experience a feeling of unrelenting courage flowing through it fluffy body. It nodded with it's beak, signaling the time to act is now.

Pollo was feeling nervous, but more than anything, excited. He removed the sweat from his forehead. And with a slow but sure push, the airplane left the stable ground of the roof. He closed his eyes and listened.

He has too afraid to look, but he knew he had to. Opening his eyes he leaned over the roof edge and to his amazement.....Well, let's just say mom that later evening made chicken soup for dinner.